

Little

Lays

&

Plays

KAILASAM

LITTLE LAYS & PLAYS

By

KAILASAM

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Kailasam

Published by

B. S. Rama Rao, B.A.

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KAILASAM

Songs of a 'Sluggard



If at first you don't succeed
Starve. pray and try again!
L. J. [unclear]

TRIBUTE

One of the major satisfactions of my life has been my friendship and appreciation of the late Mr. T. P. Kailasam and the part I played in promoting public recognition of his versatile talents and, in particular, of his genius as a dramatist and innovator of social dramas in Kannada, and original and rational interpreter of themes in the Hindu epics in English. As a non-dramatic member of the Amateur Dramatic Association, Bangalore, I took a hand in persuading Mr. Kailasam to reduce to writing his first remarkable social play in Kannada, *Tollu Gatti*. I rejoiced when it deservedly won the prize for the best drama in the first dramatic competition instituted by the Association; when it was staged with resounding success ; when it provoked some much-needed re-thinking among the pundits of the traditional drama; and when it created a radical revolution in the stage. It was gracious of him to have made a generous reference to me in his letter of the 23rd February 1923 in which he said: "This was the selfless soul that published *Tollu Gatti* in 1923 at his own cost! An Andhra too!" I value it, not because he thought that I was an Andhra who published a play in Kannada, but because he bore testimony to the fact that my interests were not narrow and parochial.

Mr. Kailasam was to the Kannada drama what Mr. Guruzada Appa Rao was to the Telugu drama. Both depicted, not the romantic affairs of Rajas and Ranis or didactic mythological themes, but the everyday life of the common people, and used the language spoken by them in their daily life. They were pioneers of the realistic social drama. They were the first, as far as I know, who introduced the tonsured Hindu Brahmin widow in a play and on the stage! It was an innovation which shocked and scandalised the orthodox punditry. In *Tollu Gatti* Mr. Kailasam himself had to take the part of the widow, in addition to another part, as no other actor even in the Amateur Dramatic Association would take it at first!

I rejoiced when I was able to persuade Mr. Kailasam's father to acknowledge the genius of his son and take him back to his favour; when Mr. Kailasam was ultimately elected President of the Kannada Sahitya Parishad and his portrait was included in the Parishad's gallery of Kannada savants, and when he received several other marks of recognition and appreciation in Mysore and in India.

Mr. Kailasam's genius was displayed not only in Kannada but also in English, in which he portrayed and interpreted some of the episodes from the Hindu epics in a novel, original and, above all, rational manner. He used his plays, poems and witticisms, humour and satire to criticise, without offence, the current superstitions, foibles

and long-suffered social wrongs. He was an ardent social reformer through his art.

Mr. B.S. Rama Rao, the Boswell of Mr. Kailasam deserves much credit and gratitude for his unflagging zeal in editing and publishing Mr. Kailasam's writings and giving more vivid expression to them by recitations and revealing Mr. Kailasam as a national and international savant. May his efforts bear ample fruit.

"Aloha'

Basavangudi

P. KODANDA RAO

Bangalore-4

July 1, 1964

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A LETTER TO THE PUBLISHER

My Dear Deshapande,

I have always felt that the mob rendered greater service to the Eternal City by smothering Cinna the poet, than the officiously patriotic Brutus and his confreres ever did by their pointed inquiries into vital matters personally pertaining to Caesar.

I have felt too that Timon could have glutted his ire more fully by turning poet than himself out of Athens.

Add to this my belief that *Mr. Punch's* immortal dictum to the matrimonially minded, is of greater efficacy to poets and playwrights who rashly rush into print—and you will realise why I have hitherto religiously held off from inflicting my own effusions on a public that has never been unkind to me in my role of mime and mummer.

Whatever be your own quarrel with society that you should have resolved to play the thankless part of publisher of my poetastory, I, for my part, feel relieved of all responsibility in the matter in pointing out to you that should your enterprise draw a hornet's nest round your head, your weapon of retaliation is in your own hands in the shape of another sheaf of my efforts to help you emulate the bad singer who, angered at his hissing

audience, growled "Two can play at this game!",
and proceeded to venge himself by shrieking out an
unasked for encore !

With kind regards

MAHANANDI

I remain

Dec. 15th '33

yours sincerely

KAILASAM

*A Poet's guerdon is not gold,
Not Parian bust, not trappings brave !
A tear, a titter from young and old
Is all the meed I meekly crave !*

THE DRAMATIST

A Brahma designs! A Vishnu sustains!

A Cinder-grim'd SIVA doth slay !

The dramatist deigns when Durga ordains,

The Trinity's Play to display !

* * *

The yellow stragglers of all setting moons

Do linger but to vex a risen Sun!

ETERNAL CAIN

If luscious fruit begat of tree
Beget but its own dam the tree,
May weal of Man begat of woe
Beget aught else for him but woe!

* * *

Since blood-red dawn of fateful day,
This Brute-Divine saw light of day,
Whilst *God* in man, sees Right from Wrong,
'Tis *Brute* in him, to right a wrong,
That spills the blood of brother man
And stills the Voice of *God* in man!

TRUTH NAKED

We call thee 'brother', Scavenger ;

We lie, believe us not:

Would we dare set our kindred on

The task that is thy lot?

We call thee 'friend', O Scavenger ;

We lie, believe us not:

Thy *Home* reeks ranker than *Latrines*,

And we, reckon not a jot.

We call thee 'hero', Scavenger ;

We lie, believe us not:

A soul that conquers flesh is not

A carrion-feeding sot.

Until we callous callid brutes

For dread of Wrath Divine,
Desist from crime of coz'ning thee
To play the human swine ;

Until thy sodd'n eyes do awake
To thine own manliness,
Our cant of "brother", "hero", "friend",
Is balderdash, no less !

K

THE LAKE

WHEN Night had wav'd her magic wand
And bid the Moon awake
The Moonbeams 'lighted hand in hand
Upon a lonely Lake.

And as their tiny twinkling feet
Did trip and skip in glee,
The Lake in mournful tone did greet
Her guests so gay and free:

"You're welcome friends," the Lake did say
"To find your happiness,
On what there is of me to-day !
Tomorrow I'll be less !"

"Oh, Shame! But why ?" the Beams did pause

To ask in sympathy ;
“Kind friends, you'll hardly guess the cause
That's slowly killing me !

“On less and less of me each night
Your feet will trip and tread!
And one sad night your steps will 'light
On just my clayey bed !”

“Oh cruel, sad! It can't be right !”
The Beams vowed tearfully ;
“Do let us know please of your plight !
We'd like to, awfully !”

“Not very very long ago
You'll scarcely believe me,
This mouldy muddy mass of woe
Was not *me* really !

“A bluer hue of blue was I
Than blue of sky or sea ;
Each fleecy cloud that floated by
I mirror’d faithfully ;

“And graceful swans with necks of snow
On me did glide and race ;
And lilies white, gold, pink did blow
Upon my limpid face !

“And *Sun* and *Moon*! Stars big and wee
And things that bide the Earth,
Came night and day to bathe in me
And praise my worth and birth !

“Though bless’d in ev’ry way to live
In happy calm content,
My mind did now and then misgive

My heart with resentment :

“Whilst ev’rything above, around
Could run or swim or soar,
My wretched lot did keep me bound
To banks for evermore !

“The very stars and clouds so free
I mirror’d faithfully,
Did seem to mock imprison’d me;
Oh! How I shrieked to flee !

“This yearn for freedom set my heart
Abrooding night and day;
And moodily I played my part
To guests that came my way.

“Though kind alike to ev’ry guest

Polite to ev'ry one,
Ere long, I grew to like one best,
Mad fool! I lov'd the *Sun*!

"I don't know if you know Love's way?
It's dreadful, really !
In chips you fling your heart away
For chunks of misery !

"Why ! Lambs that tickle a tiger's side
And moths that flirt with flames
Are wise without a doubt beside
The mug that plays Love's games!

"In Love's deft hands I was clay
Forgetting wrong and right;
I hugg'd and kiss'd the *Sun* all day
And dream'd of him all night!

“His broiling hug and burning kiss
Did thrill me all ablaze,
And things around seem’d in my bliss
But shadows in a haze!

“Mad giddy chump! I little guess’d
I’d live to rue the day
I fell in love, nor had assess’d
The price I’d have to pay!

“For when I woke from Love’s mad dream
I found to my dismay
My mossy velvet banks did seem
Mud-brown and miles away !

“My water’s hue, a blue no more
Had turn’d a clammy green!

Of swans and bathers, shore to shore
Not e'en a sign was seen!

“My lilies white, gold, pink and blue—
Alas! I weep to state —
Were boil'd, burn'd and turn'd to stew !
My Love had seal'd their fate !

“And even *Pigs* that pass my way,
Say ‘We’re afraid it’s time
We went around elsewhere to play ;
Why, this is worse than slime !’

“Thus loath'd-and lonely brink to brink
I weep in misery
Against the day my Love will drink
What little's left of me!”

Whilst thus in woe the Lake poured out
Her piteous history,
Sore helplessly she look'd about
As though for sympathy !

But strange to say, to her dismay
The Moonbeams did but grin!
And peal on peal of laughter gay
Did fill the air with din!

The Lake enrag'd thro' wounded pride
Remark'd in caustic tone:
"I'm glad my plight doth well provide
My guests with food for fun!"

The Beams forthwith with looks contrite
Suppress'd their ill-tim'd mirth,
But said "Dear Lake, we're sure you're quite

The blindest thing on earth!

“You little guess’d we Beams so gay
That prance on you by night
Are but the Sun’s hot rays by day
That brought you to this plight!

“The *Sun* you love so faithfully
Doth love thee too, dear friend,
And day by day works manfully
Your prison’d state to end!

“And drop by drop he drinks his love
To carry her on high,
Until amidst the clouds above
A cloud she’ll roam the sky!

“And far and wide, and high and low,

You'll wander gay and free;
'Tis then dear Lake you'll surely know
How true the *Sun* loves thee !

“And then, somewhen, like things possess'd
For long do cloy at last,
Your yearn to flee, which once obsess'd
Your heart and mind, dies fast;

“And thoughts of happy nights and days
You spent as Lake on earth
Return, and turn your heart Earthways ;
Again you'll take your birth

“As some huge sea, Earthbound but free
To heave and roll your fill,
Bounded by banks but built by thee
To break or make at will !

“On moonlit nights as bright as this
Your mem’ry will awake
To other moonlit nights of bliss
You spent on Earth as Lake!

“With joyous hiss, rejoicing roar,
You’ll seethe and shoot on high
To greet us Beams your friends of yore
Ere e’en we quit the sky!

“And thus you see you are, dear Lake,
Not what you think you are:
'Tis lilies, swans and banks that make
You *feel* a lake, and bar

“The light to know thyself as One
Not *Lake* nor *Cloud* nor *Sea*

But each a guise *You* will to don
To hide *Thyself* from *Thee*!

“But lo! Thy love doth mount the East
And lures us from the Moon
To light and warm earth, plant and beast
And free you too ere noon !”

And as they spoke, the Beams did turn
To blinding scorching rays
That set about the, lake to burn
Her free of ‘prison’d days.

KAIKEYEE

O Hapless Queen ! Illfated child of Fame!

Thy husband's love, his dotage-born obsession !

How well thy life illumines the dreadful lesson

That fleshtound love is one consuming flame !

O dauntless soul in woman's fragile frame,

In days of yore thy *love for lord* did burn

Thine inborn fears, thy sex to ashes turn

The while thy daring snatch'd the Gods from shame

Of dire defeat; anew, thy *love for son*,

Thy love to see him all Ayodhya's king,

Did burn the Queen the Wife in thee! How brief

Is joy in fleshbound love! How fraught with grief

This luring flame, this flame-consuming thing !

How grave its toll, how dire the havoc done!

A righteous monarch's death of broken heart:

A woman's anguish lorn of lord and child:
A kingdom's mourn and yearn for heir exil'd:
All these thou wrought! And yet were these no part
Of plan of thy devise: The ruthless art
That rain'd red ruin o'er the Raghu land
Was work of Fate whose woeful vengeful hand
Sent e'en thy dream to crown thy son athwart !
Thy wiles brought gall to all and joy to none.
Misguided queen, Ambition's thoughtless fool,
The Hunch thy mentor, Hell's vile myrmidon
That fann'd a mother's 'spiring spark to flame,
That fiend in guise and guile, thy friend in name
Was imp of Fate, non else, and thou her tool !!

Relentless Fate, when she did turn her face
In wrath upon the Raghu clan and land,
Her blackest look she cast, her gravest hand
She laid on him thy son, whose prowess, grace

And wisdom mark'd him noblest of his race:
Ador'd of parent, brother, kin and spouse,
Admir'd of friend, afear'd of foe, his House
Ne'er gender'd greater son! Yet fast apace
Did fate's dire darts descend his sinless head,
Fate's feminine freaks, alack, were ever so:
The guilty left unscath'd, the guileless bled
Of heart or burnt of soul ! At one fell blow
Was he bereft of sire and kin, and thou
His best-lov'd mother loose'd this flood of woe !

Calamity's touchstone to assay
True worth of humankind. Whilst craven hearts
Do rage and rave, the brave their nobler parts
Geroke and calmly brunt their woe. The sway
Of grief or vengeful ire unveils the way
Of churls: thy son, had he been base of breed
Or faint of heart or mean of soul, thy deed

Had surely charg'd his reeling brain to slay,
Nay, tear thee limb from limb, to vent his ire
And venge a widow'd mother's broken heart,
A people's mourn and death of godly sire !
But e'en a madden'd woman's monster crime
Could scarcely ruffle his soul serene, sublime:
Sore Pity 'twas replac'd Revenge's part !

In pity's light it is that *God* doth view
All human sins. And Pity's light doth shed
No purple rays of Pride: nor Ire's blood-red
Nor Envy's green nor Fear's jaundice hue
Mars Pity's flame whose lambent limpid blue
Reveals the *God* in Man! The burden grave
Prince Bharatha in Pity bore to save
His mother's burning soul in kindly dew
Of Chaste Kausalya's forgiveness, did start
A wail of woe for all eternity !

And cleft in twain to con thy life, my heart,
Like marg'ret-shell athirst for *Swaathee's* rain
Did gasp agape and froze my tears of pain
Into this song of soul-deep sympathy !

K

DRONA

THY flaunted virgin phalanx cleft a-two
By but a stripling, thine own pupil's son
Whose bow abash'd his sire's preceptor! You,
In pain of tortur'd vanity, let run
Thine ire to blind thee to the blackest deed
Besmirch'd the scroll of Aryan Chivalry!
The while thy master's ghoulish hate did feed
And fatten on thy victor's butchery,
Thy father's heart had it bore some pity
For Partha in his dire calamity,
Dread Nemesis had spar'd thine aged brain
The searing, killing agony accrued
Of death of *thine own* son. Thou didst but drain
The bitter gall thy *vanity* had brewed!

COMMISERATION

FLUNG adrift by very mother at birth;
Accurs'd of anger'd tutor in thy youth;
Forlorn of friend and kith and kin; in sooth,
A nameless, aimless waif on earth.
Relentless Fate swoop'd thee to serve Her aim,
And veer'd thy steps into a nest of plots
And feuds: A Royal house of power-drunk sots,
Perdue to Pity, Chivalry, e'en shame !

Beguil'd with bribe of crown to battle in cause
Of king, who match'd thee 'gainst thy very kin,
Thy valour, bounty, innocence of sin
Avail'd thee naught 'gainst unjust death. Alas!
Befooled babe 'gainst Fate's bewild'ring odds!
Bejewell'd bauble of the jeering Gods !

MOTHER-LOVE

ALL love is blind! Is mad! And what of love
Sees cygnet Kinglings in unlovely ducklings ? —
Rainbow-plumed dulcet warblers in
Her uncouth croaking raven's sooty chicks ?—
Why, blindest, maddest love of all, I ween,
Is certes, weird and wondrous Mother-Love !

THE SIXTH COLUMNIST 1943

WITH Boche and Bolshie “Up the Pole”

“Appeasement” off its perch,

The Bull-Frog in his Latin hole

Left crockless in the lurch,

With Nazis slaying East and West

To spread their kult of Peace-

Their Vaterland a prey to pest

Of Hitler’s brain disease.

With Jappie chewing “China” bits

Far more than he can lump

And throwing chronic colic fits

The greedy, giddy chump !

With Indians touring Lands O’ West

In search of civ'lis'd ease;
To find too late that "Home is best"
With no body to please;

With Muslim breaking Hindu pate
And vice versa too,
With potentate of native State
A tiger or cuckoo,

With Gandhi caged safe in quod,
Away from pals and mates,
To Meditate upon his God —
On soya beans and dates,

The talk in train or tram or bus
Is all of war and gore!
To ME, why, all this war-time fuss
Is but a beastly bore!

For what care I for Europe's war
Or India's dream "Swaraj" ?
A host of Hitlers may not mar
My own, my PERSONAL Raj!

Let Britain boast of battleships,
The Boche of blitzkriegs brag,
Let Europe's dire dictatorships
Prove John Bull's reddest rag;

Let India e'er in fatal clutch
Of famine, pest and beast
Suffer a-fresh as n'er so much
Through squabbling priest and priest.

Let patriots pop in and out
Of cabinet and jail,

Let Shibboleth and slogan shout

Drown the ryot's wail;

Let 'Parties' 'wings', 'sabhas' and 'blocks'

Revel in plots and cliques !

Let congressites pull up their socks

At risk of bursting breeks ;

Let "Leaguers" spout of "Palkistans"

With tongues in brazen cheeks,

Let "Crackistans" and "Talkistans"

Absorb political freaks ;

To ME, to whom Earth itself is

But land surrounding ME

MY food, MY bed, domestic bliss,

MY job with guarantee

Of pension when I'm old and grey.

Are all that ME worry !

Thus, whiche'er way this world may sway,

On velvet is THIS ME!

K

**Woman the Eternal sufferer and
Man the conventional consoler**

A MONOLOGUE

(These scenes, these words, you've seen, you've heard)

—As the curtain rises, found entered —

The Man in the Foreground

(Enter R, a little child sobbing over a broken doll)

THE MAN

Don't cry little child, don't cry !

They have broken your doll, I know!

Your playhouse new, this dolly too

Are things of the long ago!

These Childish troubles will soon go by,

And Books and Pictures will soon come by;

So there, little child, don't cry.

[Leads the child and gently pushes her out-L]

(Enter R, a little girl sobbing over a broken Slate and tattered Picture Books)

THE MAN

Don't cry little girl, don't cry!

They have broken your slate, I know!

And your picture books, your chubby looks

Are things of the long ago!

These sad wild ways

Of school-girl days

Will soon be things of the long ago

And silks and gems will soon come by

So there, little girl don't cry!

[Girl exits—L]

(Enter R, a maid in Grey sobbing over a broken necklace)

THE MAN

Don't cry little maid, don't cry !
They have broken your necklace, I know !
And your silken things, your gem-set rings
Are things of th' long ago !
But these were made t' be seen and hurled:
Th' glittering tinsels of a passing world !
Why, Life and Love, will soon come by ;
So there. little maid, don't cry.

[Maid exits—L]

(Enter R, a young woman, in widow's robe)

THE MAN

Don't cry, Little Woman, don't cry!
They have broken your heart, I know!
And the rainbow gleams
O' your Love's young dreams,
Are things of th' long ago!

Fate turn'd your short liv'd joy to dull despair!
And bid you tread this darken'd world alone!
You pass through life, hopeless and desolate,
Your Love: the memory of a star eclips'd!
It is not given to every one of us, Little Woman
To bask in the brilliance of the dawn, or to revel
In the splendour of the noon of the day of our life!
But we shall All find, if only we will,
a sweet calm sunset
And of peaceful blessedness at the end of
this day of our Life !
And peace, no more but peace, is all yours ! And
After the end of this day of your life...!...
.... Why! Heaven holds all for which you sigh !
So there Little Woman, don't cry! don't cry!

[Young woman exits]

CURTAIN

K

THE RECIPE

INTO a bare handful of bones and skin
Pour just an ounce or so of flesh and blood;
Put in a heart love-full as SEA in flood;
Likewise a mind sea-deep and free from sin;
Fix on two jumboo ears, ... two goo-goo eyes;
Paint on a smile of babe at mother's breast;
Inclose a soul that caps Himavat's crest
And, speaks with tongue which honey's sweet defies! ;

The "Stuffing?" : Goat's milk, soya beans and dates ;
Now, cover to brim with suff'ring human's tears
And bake this dish in gaol for one score years ;
Take out and "garnish" it with pariah mates;
Wrap up in rag, prop up with lithe bamboo
And serve: *The World Redeemer: Our Baapoo !*

THE SWALLERUS AND THE CLOTHVENDOR

With apologies to... . Lewis Carroll

The Smilin Seven

1930

—A Retrospect —

THE Sun bereft o' reason, rhyme
Was shining day and night;
He dar'd not jib at overtime
Because of Empire's might
Whose sway in every land and clime
God fear'd to trust sans light !

Traders' Tory, vendors' Whig
Did confer tete-a-tete ;
They wept to see a Brownland big

Oozing oof to sweat,
The human rights of freedom twig
From rebel brown and jet !

“ ’Tis naughty of the natives brown”
A belted Tory said:
“To buy at word of fasting clown
Sheer self-made muck instead
Of goods and cloth Brummagem grown,
To dump on heathen head !”

“Just so”, a whilom Whig agreed:
“ ’Tis time something we did,
In spirit of our Xian creed,
The colour’d man to rid
Of dreams above ’is skin and breed !
’Tis time we put the lid

“On bombing baboo, seething Sikh
Salaaming Southerner too
With generous use of jail and stick
And taught each to eschew
The tenets of a fasting freak
Taboo to men of hue!

“With John-bull-dog truly set on
His motley, measly band,
Their joss the living skeleton
Will burst his noddle, and
Your beef and beer you may bet on
Our “dough”-nut rising grand !”

“Good egg! Yet ’tis not, dontcherknow,
The thin end of the wedge !:
They would not buy our goods, oh no!,
With “lathied” teeth on edge!

The nag you thrash to H₂O

Well, would he sign the pledge?:

“If Seven men of simple look

And manner meek and mild

Did scour each squalid native nook

And kissed each ‘depressed’ child,

Right in, the fatheads will be “took”

And back to trade beguiled ?!”

“A canny thocht, ah maun declair!,

“Yet, weel, ah hae mah doots!”

Their Premier spake ruffling his hair,

His eyes were on his boots:

“Sae till you Seven are back frae there

Just hawd your blether and shoots!”

The chosen sev’n they steamed the main

And Brownland's shore did reach!
With blue eyes belching briny rain
But winking each to each;
The Septette croon'd this soft refrain,
Ere they had spann'd the beach:

"O Brothers, in our ALMIGHTY !,
Though baked brown and black,
We come from far off Belighty
To con whatever ye lack!"
But Brownland's starv'd humanity
Yell'd (!), "Gorah Sahbs, go back !"

All unabash'd the Smilin' Sev'n
Did only smile the more!
With eyes aloft invoking Heav'n
In plaintive tones they swore:
"Our hearts intend no lure nor leav'n!

Your distrust we deplore !

“O loved brothers sun-kiss’d brown,
Come for a pleasant walk !
Your sacred land we would be shown,
Each temple, tree and stalk !
And all ye yearn for, make them known
To us in pleasant talk!”

The cutest Brown, ... he heav’d a sigh,
But ne’er a word he said;
With sweetest smile he wink’d his eye
And shook his shaven head,
Meaning, mayhap, he felt too shy
To leave his spinning shed !

But white sheep darken blackest flock
And hens hatch quacking, chicks ;

With borrowed plume of blue peacock
Daws and to Nature's freaks;
And Brownland too in human stack
Bred boobs whose brains were nix !

Inferiority complex —
That soul debasing pest
Which bends a people's proudest necks
To alien behest
Had fashioned spine-broke human Wrecks
Of Brownland's very best.

When Greed a demon, 'gin or elf
Obsesses human soul,
'Tis sense of pleasure of pow'r or pelf
Distorts a human's goal;
And he, confusing sense for self
Doth fork out Satan's toll,

In loss of manhood, honour, truth,
Love of land o' birth;
And Brownland's sons, blind in sooth,
To their own blood and worth,
Betrayed their land, both man and youth
The greatest land on earth.

K

KRISHNA

A woman's witching face, her ways, her eyes;
A panther's frame, its grace, mayhap its heart;
An eerie mastery of ev'ry art;
A honey-tongue that steep'd all truths in lies
And yet could strip all lies in light of *Truth*
A smile that mock'd at plight of friend in Woe;
A breast that bled at sight of fallen foe;
Ador'd and yet afear'd of all, in sooth:

Thou tangl'd mass of man and god and brute,
What mortal mind may con thy rainbow-life
That blazed undimm'd 'mid storms of human strife,
And glean the wisdom of thy madd'ning flute,
Thy love-lit crimes, thy kindly cruelties,
Thou paradox for all eternities !

Subhadra— A Threnody

I'LL never never see my boy again!

I'll never kiss his bonny face again !

A thunderbolt, he span'd the battle-plain

And cleft the whirling phalanx right in twain!

But my own boy ?—I'll never see again !

Ill never never see my boy again !

I'll ne'er caress his winsome eyes again !

I heard my son's triumphant battle shout,

I saw his teeming foemen put to rout!

But my own boy ?—I'll never see again !

I'll never never see my boy again !

I'll never hear his gurgling laugh again !

I heard his vanquish'd foemen's dying cries.

I saw a blinding blaze ascend the skies

But my own boy ?—I'll never see again !

I'll never never see my boy again!

I'll never crush him to my breasts again !

That dazzling shaft on high of purple hue

His death-defying soul it was, I knew!

And knew—I'd never see my boy again!

* * *

My blinding tears, my sobs of soul in pain,

My wails of broken heart,—are all in vain!

Nor all my piteous prayers will regain

Me him whose dirge I moan in one refrain:

I'll never never see my boy again!

THE ARTIST

THE Anchorite cries in cardiac sighs,
Complaining "This Life's but a SHOW ?"
The artist decries such dolorous cries,
And gifts us his "AFTER GLOW".

K

THE BURDEN

A Playlet

of

THE RAAMAAYANA

The Burden

Personae :

BHARATA	}	Princes of Kosala
SATRUGHNA		
VASISHTHA	...	Priest to the Royal House
ANGA	}	Aged Chamberlains-at-court
VANGA		
Other servitors at the Palace		

Place :

A corridor in the Palace

Period :

Ayodhya Kaanda of the RAAMAAYANA

Time :

Early Night

Place

“THE KING’S WALK” : A CORRIDOR—DIM LIT

[Enter: Bharata and Satrughna travel-begrimed]

Bharata : (rubbing his eyes with the backs of his hands) Oh, the dust! The blinding dust !... To watch the fleetest steeds in all the land sniff up that red ribbon of a road from uncle’s here, did bring elation to my *heart* ; but to mine *eyes*, the dust !, makes e’en the King’s own walk seem dimly lit !

Satrughna : (apprehensively) “Seem dimly lit?” But Bharata, it is dim lit...I fear’d it would be so!

Bharata : You fear’d it? How?

Satrughna : Intent on steering fleetsome steeds through surging streets, *thine* eyes did miss what *mine* descried: ’Twas bleak and blear our way through Ayodhya; methought the people glared at us...their looks unwelcome, callous, cold! e’en condemning ;..... and here our father’s favourite walk all gloomy... clammy ! Bharata, I feel so strangely frightened !

Bharata : Affrighted! *You!* (laughing) Well art thou named Dread Satrughna! A terror to thine enemies without a doubt; but thou art ev’n a bigger one to thine own self! The

people's glare forsooth ! Perchance the rains have held off hereabout and grains are scarce: bare stomachs lend but poor succour to muster smiles of welcome! Or mayhap the chase hath lur'd our Rama to the wilds and cozened poor Ayodhya's eyes of wonted feast! But why is the King's Walk dimly lit? Perchance the King's away! ... but where away? ... He has not been away this long long while... and then 'twas Indra;... I have-it! 'Tis Sakra with his cousins rampant, raging... hath slyly snar'd the king to battle for him as once he did before of yore! You know the story?

Satrughna : Aye, I've heard my elders tell of it; I've heard tell too 'twas our Little Queen-Mother Kaikeyee that with her daring sav'd the Devas from disaster !

Bharata : (in alarm) ...*She* will be away too! With her beloved lord at battle, she would not lag behind; my mother cannot breathe beyond the king's side! And what of Rama? With his mighty arm a-twitch to draw bow at the king's side, he would not laze at home nor would Mahendra let him, and, Lakshmana ? But why Jet our fears father sombre thoughts ; 'tis easily known...(aloud)

Anga : (entering) Your Commands, Sire!

Bharata : (to Satrughna) He takes me for the king! And to his age-dimmed eyes, this gloom doth lend but poor succour. (to Anga) I'm Bharata, my lord!

Anga : I knew it, Sire!

Bharata : 'Sire' again! His ears have gone too the way of his eyes—past sensing! Poor ancient! And yet I've heard tell, brother, that in his prime, his lordship had the straightest back of any that drew bow in the King's Guard! And at chase, his lordship could see farther, hear sharper than any that went hunt with the King! And now, 'tis this! 'Tis a sin to grow old, Saumitri, one really must not!

Satrughna : (smiling) But, Bharata, 'tis *Time's* edict that one *must* grow old if one *will* live long!

Bharata : Why then, methinks, one must not live past the sensing of one's senses! (approaching the old man) I am Bharata, my lord, the prince and not the king. How then, my lord!, whence doth it come to pass the King's Own Walk is dimly lit? Is it, the King's away? And what of Rama, ...our royal brother ?

Anga : (stragglingly and incoherently) The King... my liege... is... the Prince... is...

Bharata : (impatiently) Nay! 'tis dotage dulls his senses and we but waste our time! (aloud) Forgive us m'lord but we would to our royal brother Rama— (attempts to walk past Anga)

Anga : (feebly attempting to restrain Bharata) Nay, Sire!... the King... the Printer... the Princess... Heavens... I can... no... more!

(falls forward)

Bharata : (catching him in his arms) Poor ancient! He *will* brush aside his king's behest to forbear from work and rest his limbs sore tried in the service of the Estate. Why, he has fainted dead away! Help, Saumitri... (The brothers carry him to a couch)...gently... (they lay him on it: Bharata in a loud voice) *What ho! Without ! More lights ho! This gloom is maddening!*

(Enter a number of courtiers: also servants bearing lamps and torches, with Vanga at their head. Bharata pointing to the couch)

I look to his lordship, my lords !

Vanga : (approaching the couch) Aye, Sire!

Bharata : "Sire" again! Am I awake or are we all possessed ? What does it all mean, Saumitri ?

Satrughna : I do not know, Bharata, I cannot tell; but I feel, it all portends some disaster that has befallen us !!

Bharata : Disaster! The Gods forbid! (to Vanga) How doth his lordship, my lord !

Vanga : (approaching) But poorly, Sire! We have but ill hopes of his lordship's mending, and fear his scant breath portends his fast-approaching last!

Bharata : Poor ancient! Send for his kin; and the physicians too! (approaching the couch seats himself by the prone man; running his hand gently over the old man's brow, in a soothing tone) How is it with thee, my lord! ?

Anga : (Opening his eyes which have a bleary faraway look in them) Oh! That I the hoariest in all Ayodhya, that I should have lived to see what I have seen and not died ere the king died! Oh, that I should have lived to see the great king's death, the princes banished ! God...punish...the wicked...queen !

Bharata : (aloud, in alarm) What *horror* is this ?

Anga : (looking at Bharata with intelligent eyes) The boy king! (Laying his hand on the prince's head) Forgive me, sire; as child and boy, as youth and man, all your life I've known Your Majesty. The kingship's trust, Ayodhya's weal were ne'er in safer hands. And blessing you, I die my liege. May God forgive the thoughtless queen whose only sin was nature 'cited love of dam for son! [falls back dead]

Bharata : (reverently closing the dead eyes, stands up: ...in dignified tones) My lords, his lordship of Anga's valiant and upright soul hath found its well-earned rest at last? (to

Vanga) His lordship's kin arrived yet? (some one exits)
Saumitri, our king father will sorely miss his tried friend
and thane! But, what of his ranting? 'Twas no less; you
heard it all: he called me boy-king! And did speak of a great
king that died: a banished prince; his mother wicked with
"nature 'cited love of dam for son!" What king? When died?
And wherefore the banishment of the prince her son if the
queen the mother loved him? And whence again the
"wickedness" of love of dam for son if "nature 'cited?" ...I've
heard tell brother, that as the *soul* parts company with its
ancient henchman the *body*, the *mind* in its final flutter
conjures up lights and sights free of sway of reason and
rakes up and spreads out in *new* shapes scenes of *old*
happenings buried deep 'neath the ken of sane
remembrance; Perhaps in his lordship's long-lived life, the
horrors of the happenings of some royal house, left a
wound so deep and so poorly healed, the cicatrice broke
anew at his last breath and swayed his tongue; Why! *you*,
my lord of Vanga, his lordship's co-eval, peer in rank,
comrade in arms and friend of youth and prime, *you* of any
here should wot if aught of sense or truth there was in his
lordship's last mutterings!? Was there ever a king died in
his lordship's life time ? (Vanga drops his eyes) Why!
Whence this silence? Was I not understood? Speak, my
lord, I charge thee !

Vanga : (in distracted tone... aside) The Gods help me!
(aloud) Aye, Sire, there *was* a king that died during his lordship of Anga's lifetime!

Bharata : There was!? "Great King" he called him; was he, this king that died, as great as our dread Lord? Could not be! And what of a prince banished! And a wicked queen-mother too; what of her? (Vanga and the other courtiers, with heaving bosoms look away; Bharata astonished at their behaviour laughs sardonically) Without a doubt, brother mine, they *are* all possessed! (turning round, notices Satrughna, a prey to his own premonitions, has buried his face in his hands) What! ? You too! ? What ails thee, Saumitri? (approaching him, shakes him gently) Come man, come!

Satrughna : (agonised in face and voice) Bharata, do you not yet...understand ! ?

Bharata : Understand ?...what?

Satrughna : The... king... that... died ...!

Bharata : What, he,... that his lordship spoke of ? Why, what of him ?

Satrughna : Why... Bharata... 'tis... 'tis...!!!

Bharata : (the horror and suffering on Satrughna's face sets Bharata thinking and sudden as a thunderclap, the truth

bursts on his mind; in tones of frenzied despair and anger) What *he?*... (With limbs taut, and clenched fists defiantly challenging the room) *Not he!* 'Tis a *lie ! A fiendish.....God...* (in helpless resignation)... 'Tis the truth! (collapses on the back of the couch where the dead man lies; in the agonised voice of a stricken fawn and with face buried in his hands) My... king!My father!..... Never to look on thy loved face again! Never to look into thy loving eyes again! Never to hear thy kindly voice again!

Satrughna : (approaching, touches him in the nape of his neck; in a voice blended of sympathy and protest) Bharata, remember who you are!

Bharata : (reiterating dazedly) "Remember...who... I...am? Who....I..." (with an effort... aloud to Vanga) Is his holiness the Sage Vasishtha in the Palace ?

Vanga : Aye, Sire!

Bharata : (plaintively) Then, bespeak for me, my lord, that Bharata, numb'd in limb and mind, hungers for sight and touch of His Holiness' feet, *here !* And... (raising his voice with effort, to the courtiers) We would be alone! (all the retinue leave noiselessly by the right egress from the corridor, while Vanga leaves by the left.)

[Bharata with superhuman effort is controlling his emotions, glaring wildly at the left ingress to the corridor.

The moment the sage Vasishtha enters, one bound of hysterical frenzy lands him near the Rishi]

Bharata : (in almost threatening notes) Could you not ...you, the greatest of the great ones of the earth....could you not have sav'd him.... and....saving him....sav'd us all too!!!? (collapses at the Rishi's feet; Satrugna brushing away his fast-falling tears, places a chair immediately behind the sage)

Vasishtha : (seats himself, the princes still prone at his feet; in a dispassionate voice charg'd with a soupcon of admonition) It is not in my heart to chide thee, child! But this helplessness of thine, belies thy sex, thy learning, thy blood, thy lineage and prepares thee but ill for thy man's task of bearing the burden that *fate* hath placed on thee, the greatest of the *Raaghavas* ! (laying his hand gently on Bharata's head) Calamities like these, aye, greater than these are sent us but to try our strength, of body and mind, of heart and soul !

Bharata : (like a cobra stricken to death, limply raises its hood for the last time, raises his head, his welling eyes meeting the Rishi's; in a voice fraught with heart-rending agony) Try us? Try us great one? Try our strength of *heart and mind and soul*? But, why, great one, why the trial of this one humble soul spell a great people's grief? He meant as much to millions and more as to me! Why? Why? Why?

(collapses at the Rishi's feet)*

CURTAIN DROPS SLOWLY

*This playlet grew into a second scene *a la* most of the other creations of Kailasam. It is being published in the forthcoming book "Kailasam Miscellany" comprising of similar creations of his works left unfinished.

A NOTE
on
Fulfilment

['Fulfilment', a sequel to 'Purpose', was created on the spur of the moment when Kailasam declaimed his then half-written-typed play 'Purpose' to Dr. (Sir) C.R. Reddy (Founder of the Andhra University and later Pro-Chancellor of the Mysore University) who naively asked Kailasam after the Recital, "Well! What becomes of Ekalavya then?" Kailasam's answer was, 'Fulfilment!', the play fullfledged, of three Acts; In the last act Ekalavya meets his end by Krishna's hands. Needless to say, that Reddy was struck by this recital. He said simply "Kailasam! You *must* write the whole series !"

According to Kailasam,

"Jaraasandhaha Chaydi-raajo mahaatma

Mahaabaahuhu Ekalavyo nishaadaha

Ekyekasaha twaddhitaartham hataaha MAYAIVA"

—The Mahaabhaarata

which he could recall at that moment lent support to his creation and there the episode ended. The first two acts will be found in the “Kailasam Miscellany”]

FULFILMENT

A Playlet

of

THE MAHAABHAARATA

Fulfilment

Personae :

EKALAVYA — Chief of the Nishaadas

KRISHNA — Chief of the Vrishnis

Period :

Eve of Kurukshetra

Place :

A Forest-Glade

Place

A GLADE IN EKALAVYA'S FOREST

[Time: Noontide]

Found: Krishna seated on a fallen tree-trunk

[All round him a number of fawns are gathered, some nestling up close and some—the tiniest of them—even resting their heads on his shoulders and knees, and all nodding in synchrony with the rhythmic lyft of swell and fall of liquid notes —now sharply spurting, now softly dribbling— out of his flute of bamboo reed]

Ekalavya : (entering precipitately and astounded at the uncanny tableau) Hai! What are you doing to my fawns?

Krishna : (unperturbed) *Your* fawns ?

Ekalavya : Aye, *My* fawns!

Krishna : (glancing significantly over the fawns resting on him... in a dry tone) Looks like it, does it not?

Ekalavya : (bursting into a guffaw) Ha! Ha! Ha! 'Deed, it *does not* ! But it did amaze me seeing them nestling up to a stranger, a thing they have never done afore ! I wonder why? I know! 'Tis your music! (coming close to Krishna) And your face too! (approaching closer} handsome...

beautif... why! I like you *myself* ! I wonder why? ... tis your eyes... weird... wondrous... eyes ! (with the eerie limbless grace of a king-cobra Krishna rises and drawing himself up to his full height, meets Ekalavya squarely in the eyes. Ekalavya fascinated into drawing closer, gazes for moments together into Krishna's eyes and almost breathes his words) Do you know, there is a *something* about you that makes me feel that I have seen you before, *somewhere*! Known you before, *somewhen* ! Wh'...Wh'...Who are you?

Krishna : (almost roughly pushing aside the fawns in his way, walks full three paces away from Ekalavya; with stiffened neck and averted face; in harsh, haughty and almost: grating accents) You are the barbarian bowman, the thumbless nishaada, Ekalavya, are you not ?

Ekalavya : (with frame suddenly stiffened, limbs taut and eyes hardened and in a voice subdued with obvious effort) Stranger though you are, you seem to know me! (sardonically) yes! I *am* the barbarian Ekalavya!; the thumbless bowman! And yet, (with furious voice and look) thumbless as I am, I am the greatest bowman on earth, not even well-born aryan excepted! As for my being a nishaada, I am the lord of all the nishaadas in the land as was my father before me who died battling for his king, as I shall too for mine!

Krishna : The king your father fought and fell for, was a righteous man; the creature you are bent on depraving your bow for, is an adharmi !

Ekalavya : (with chin raised on high) It is not for *me* to dispute the dharma of my king; *my* dharma is to draw bow at my king's behest and slay his foemen.

Krishna : (facing Ekalavya; in a sneering tone) And the while you go forth to do it, 'tis nothing to you that you leave behind you the mother that bore you, brought you forth, brought you up, and made you what you are! The ingrate who, in his search for vain glory, leaves his old mother behind, a prey to the fury of forest wolves is a coward unworthy of the name of *man*, let alone, *bowman*!

Ekalavya : (with a supercilious smile) Whoever you are, you look as though you know everything ; and talk like it too! But you do not know everything; you do not know my *mother*! (with fists clenched till the knuckles stand out and eyes blazing, thunders out) *Listen!* Long long ago, with me yet a wee mite hugging at her knees, she sent my father out to battle, with a smile on her lips, though her heart was breaking; "Go, my love" she said, "Go and battle for your king! It is for you men to go when the call comes, and for us women to let you go, nay, send you forth, and await bravely, praying for your return; and, if you do not, to lump our grief and bring up your little ones to tread the path

their sires did tread!"... Having brought me up all my life to follow my father's lead in life and in death, would she now let me laze at home when my king has need of me? You called me coward! Why, if I lagged behind, *She* would call me *coward*! She would deem me *no man*! And that would be worse! (laughing hysterically) And you thought my mother a helpless hag affrighted of a few wolves! You do not know my mother !!

Krishna : (with his fingers twitching impatiently) Will nothing stop you from your mad resolve to bring your hand into a fray of no concern to you?

Ekalavya : *Nothing* will stop me! 'Tis no mad resolve to fight for my king as befits the son of my sire. And you call the coming fray as of no concern to me!? Why, with Paartha's bow trained against my beloved Gurujee, my place is in the very van of the fray! And you lightly talk of stopping me from fighting for my Gurujee!! Paartha, the snake that has set out to sting the very one that taught it to sting, does not know that Gurujee's other pupil is alive. But he soon will! With my shafts will I put out the eyes that irreverently aim arrows at Gurujee! I will slither the arms that raise a bow against Gurujee! (in a final burst of frenzied fury) *Stop me! ? Nothing will stop me!*

Krishna : (suddenly changing his voice to a soft, musical one, and his face beaming with a naive smile) What tree is

that? (approaching Ekalavya, gracefully waves his arm pointing some far behind)

Ekalavya : (set back for the moment by the change in Krishna's mien, manner, face and voice recovers himself but partly) Wh'... Wh'... What tree?

Krishna : (still pointing) The one yonder..... laden heavy with red luscious fruit.

Ekalavya : Oh, that! That is the Bakula Tree. Mother and I always call it "*The Birds' Tree*" ...but...why...do you want to know...?

Krishna : That is the renowned *Bakula* is it! You see, though I am as fond of trees, flowers, birds and fawns as you are, living most of my life in crowded cities 'tis but rarely I can see the things I love most.

Ekalavya : If you are really as fond of fawns and birds as I am, you cannot be the hard man I first took you to be; my shy fawns nestling close to you proved that with all your harsh words to me, you have a soft heart. Mother always held that no one who loves innocent creatures is really hard-hearted. But believe me, though I love fawns, calves, kine and birds, my heart is not always soft; it turns hard, very hard when I see wolves that hurt the fawns I love, and I kill the wolves without remorse. You do not love wolves,

do you ?...but perhaps you have never seen them, living as you do in cities ?

Krishna : The wolves, I've mostly seen, are human-wolves.

Ekalavya : "Human-wolves?" Can such things be?

Krishna : There are! And human-fawns too that fall an easy prey to human-wolves as your forest-fawns to your forest-wolves; and I kill my wolves with as little remorse as you do yours.

Ekalavya : Do you know, it is my life's purpose to kill all the wolves in all the forests in all the land and free all innocent creatures from fear of hurt and death?

Krishna : I know it; and believe me, it is *my* life's purpose to kill all the human-wolves in all the land and free all human-fawns from fear of hurt and death.

Ekalavya : Then you are not very much unlike me in your purpose in life? But if you hope to fulfil your purpose you must be very very powerful ...a king or some thing?

Krishna : I *am* very much like you in my purpose, and I am very very powerful..... a king or something.

Ekalavya : Tell me what your concern is with the coming fray? Is Paartha...?

Krishna : (interrupting Ekalavya with a burst of laughter, and laying his left arm over Ekalavya and drawing him affectionately to himself) Ha! Ha! Ha! Let us for the moment leave Paarthas and frays and cities and kings alone, and talk of the things that we both love! (with an irresistible smile) You have not told me why you and your mother call the Bakula, the birds' tree!

Ekalavya : (mounted on his pet hobby-the discoursing to his content on the loved denizens of his forest-starts off in gleesome gushing style in manner of an ingenuous boy talking of his toys and pets) We call it the Birds' Tree because, though the fruit it bears are sweet to the tongue, we do not eat any but leave them ail for the birds. When other climes on earth are cold and other skies are gray, birds-hundreds of them—flock to our forest and build their nests on the Bakula; they lay eggs and hatch them; mother and I spend hours on end watching the mother-birds teaching their little ones to fly! With the coming of winter, when *our* clime is cold and *our* sky turns gray, and the Bakula shorn of fruit, the birds, wee and old, all fly away to warmer climes and brighter skies; and mother and I fare them well shouting to the little ones "Little birds, when the lands you fly to, turn cold in clime and gray of sky, do not forget to come back to us! Our clime will then be warm, and our sky a bright blue, and your tree heavy with fruit. *You'll*

then be big enough to build *your* own nests, lay *your* own eggs, hatch them and teach *your* little ones to fly!"

[As Ekalavya engrossed in his story is speaking with eye and mind fixed on the Bakula Tree, Krishna cautiously draws out a dagger from its sheath swinging at his jewelled girdle; with Ekalavya's body held firm in his left arm with one lightning sweep of his right he buries the blade in Ekalavya's left breast as the latter is reaching the end of his story;

Krishna tenderly catches the collapsing nishaada in his arms and lowering himself carefully to the ground, squats, with the dying Ekalavya laid across his knees]

Ekalavya : (fruitlessly trying to reach at the dagger still transfixed to his breast) You Coward! 'Tis you that is no man! Coward! To stab an unarmed man from behind his back! Why did you do it ?

Krishna : (in a firm, dispassionate tone) You said nothing would stop you from joining in the coming fray; this has stopped you!!

Ekalavya : (groaning in agony) Oh! 'Tis hard to die like this!

Krishna : It seems to me you are afraid to die!

Ekalavya : "Afraid !" Why, you fool, fear is not in my blood!

Krishna : Then why do you grieve, so?

Ekalavya : I am grieving because my mother will have nothing to love, nothing to live for in all this world when I am gone!

Krishna : If your mother will have nothing to love and nothing to live for when you are gone and will still have nothing to love and live for in this world when she herself goes, it will be really good for her as she will have nothing to be born again for in this world.

Ekalavya : (intrigued) ‘Then if one loves something in this world and wants to live to love this thing, but in the meanwhile dies, is one born once again in this world?’

Krishna : Yes. If one loves something in this world where everything dies, and wants to live to love this thing, but in the meanwhile dies, it is but fair, it is but just, that one should be born again in this World to have this thing that one loved to live for. And *God*-who is always just, who is always fair-grants every man his wish! *He* grants every wish of every one.

Ekalavya : That is of course, only if one wishes for something that is good?

Krishna : “Good ?” ...What is it that you call “good ?”

Ekalavya : Do you not know? Why, good is something that brings happiness, pleasure, to one’s self and to one’s round one; *God* grants it, does He not ?

Krishna : Yes. If one wishes for the thing you call “good” and *wishes WELL enough, God* grants it.

Ekalavya : But you said He grants every wish of every one! What if one wishes for something bad?

Krishna : “Bad ?” What is it that you call “bad ?”

Ekalavya : “Bad ?” Why, something that is not “good!” Something that brings, not happiness, but misery; not pleasure but pain. What if one wishes for something bad—not for one’s own self of course, as one would never wish for that, but for ones round one, God would not grant it, would *He* ?

Krishna : If one wishes for the something that you call “bad” and *wishes BADLY enough, God* grants it.

Ekalavya : Then He treats good and bad alike!?

Krishna : Yes, *He* treats good and bad alike.

Ekalavya : But why?

Krishna : Because, in a way, *He* is too helpless to treat good and bad apart.

Ekalavya : *God* “helpless”!? How?

Krishna : *God* cannot tell unlike things apart.

Ekalavya : Why not?

Krishna : Because *He* has nothing to live for in this world where everything dies; *He* has nothing to be born for in this world where everything dies. *He* does not live in this world as of this world, and cannot tell the unlike things of this world, apart. But though not in this world as *of* this world, *He* watches this *His* world, with His loving eyes from afar far off. *And to the far far off distant watcher of this world, all things of this world look alike:* man and beast; wolf and fawn; friend and foe; forest, tree, shrub, leaf and blade of grass; hill, dale, mountain, sand-dune and sand grain; ocean, sea, river, brook, cloud and dew drop, all look alike to him. And loving this whole world as *His* world He grants every wish of every one. After all, happiness is only misery; pleasure, only pain.

Ekalavya : Happiness only misery! Pleasure only pain! How?

Krishna : If happiness is the *having* of the thing one loves, misery is the *losing* of it; if pleasure is the *owning* of the thing one loves, pain is the *losing* of it: Your mother had the happiness of *having* a husband like your father and that is why she suffered the misery of *losing* a husband like your father; your mother has had the pleasure of *owning* a son like you, and that is why she will suffer the pain of *losing* a son like you. Other sons were born to other mothers, and other sons of other mothers died, but their birth gave her no more pleasure than their death gave her pain. It is the

owning of you in your life that gave her pleasure and it is the *losing* of the thing she *owned* that will give her pain. Happiness and pleasure enjoyed sometime in this world really spell misery and pain to be endured some other time in this world.

Ekalavya : But, cannot one be happy for ever?

Krishna : Yes. If happiness is the *having* of the thing one loves, and misery is the *losing* of it, the *having* of the thing one loves without ever *losing* it, would be happiness for ever.

Ekalavya : And what is that thing the *having* of which would bring happiness for ever?

Krishna : No thing of this world where everything dies; as your happiness of *having* it must change to the misery of *losing* it when it dies leaving you behind or you die leaving it behind.

Ekalavya : What then is the thing *not of this world* that would bring happiness for ever?

Krishna : Did you want to live for something in this world?

Ekalavya : Yes; I wanted to live long enough to kill all the wolves in the world and to see all fawns freed from fear of hurt and death.

Krishna : With your mind brimful of things of this world wherein is there room to think of anything *not* of this world?

Ekalavya : But when will I be able to think of anything not of this world?

Krishna : Only when all things of this world look so alike to you that you cannot tell unlike things of this world apart: when man and beast; friend and foe; wolf and fawn; forest, tree, shrub, leaf and blade of grass; hill, dale, mountain, desert, sand-dune and sand grain; ocean, sea, river, lake, brook, cloud and dewdrop, *all* look alike to you, the *having* of any of which giving you no happiness and the *losing* of any, giving you no misery; only when this world looks to your eyes as to a *far far off distant watcher of this world*.

Ekalavya : “Looks as to a far off distant watcher of this world”? I do not...quite...understand !

[Ekalavya in look and voice is sinking]

Krishna : You will not, not now: do not try to.

Ekalavya : (with a far away look in his eyes) My father died battling bravely for his king, and I am dying helpless...stabbed from behind!

Krishna : Your father died in battle, and before he died slew a good few foemen and made many wives lose the

happiness of having their husbands, and many mothers lose the pleasure of having their sons; but *you* spent all your life in this forest freeing innocent fawns from fear of hurt and death; and you regret it!? Would you like to slay a few foemen before you died?

Ekalavya : and make a few mothers lose... no!, if I must die... 'tis best I die...like this! But my poor mother had set her heart on my following my father's lead!... Do you know, coward as I know you are, I cannot dislike you, hard as I am trying to! Who are you?

Krishna : I am your big brother.

Ekalavya : If I were strong and not dying, I should laugh! Call yourself my big brother after slaying me! How can you be my brother and still kill me?

Krishna : Why may I not? The fawns that were all born in this forest as you were too, you have been *their* big brother, have you not?

Ekalavya : (his eyes brightening; with a sad sigh) The "big brother of my fawns"! I hope I *have* been their big brother!

Krishna : Now, the wolves that were born in this forest, if they had not hurt your fawns, you would have been *their* big brother too, would you not?

Ekalavya : Yes, if they had *not* hurt my fawns!

Krishna : But if after some time of *not* hurting, they had started to hurt the fawns, you would have killed them, brothers or no brothers ?

Ekalavya : Yes. I would have!

Krishna : There! You see, one very big brother *may* a kill his little brothers to free his still smaller brothers from hurt and death.

Ekalavya : But I have not hurt or killed any of your little brothers.....

Krishna : You are a human-wolf that *will* kill my human-fawns if not stopped!

Ekalavya : But my king.....

Krishna : You, your king and his friends are wolves that hurt my human-fawns, *and you shall all go*.

Ekalavya : (with a weak smile) And Paartha, with his bow and shafts...is a feeble fawn perhaps!

Krishna : Your king, his friends, are wolves that hurt my fawns; Paartha and his friends are wolves that *might* hurt my fawns, and *they shall go too*.

Ekalavya : But why kill me unfairly with a dagger whilst I was unarmed ?

Krishna : My killing of you was no more unfair than your killing of your wolves with steel shafts whilst you stood yards beyond the reach of their fangs. It is the *purpose* of the killing and not the *manner* of the killing that decides the fairness of the killing.

Ekalavya : It is hard to talk with you! You are far too clever forme! And yet you sound truthful...

Krishna : I *am* truthful.

Ekalavya : If you are, can I trust you to truthfully do something for me?

Krishna : You may trust me.

Ekalavya : I do not know how you wili do it, but I feel you are clever enough to do it..... Will you *somehow*..... *anyhow*..... spare my poor mother from even a moment's misery and pain of losing a son...like me?

Krishna : (earnestly) I truthfully promise you that I will *somehow*..... *anyhow*..... save your poor mother from even a moment's misery and pain of losing a son like you!

[With a faint smile on his lips Ekalavya drops his head back, dead. Krishna gazes into the dead eyes and tears trickle out of his own; raising the body, presses is lips on the bleeding breast and forthwith lets the body drop with a thud, muttering, "Clay! Clay!! Clay!!!"]

Krishna : (with the most intense disgust a human face and voice can muster) If I am not very carerul *I* shall have some thing to love in this world where everything dies! *I* shall have something to live for in this world where everything dies. *I* shall have something to be born for in this world where everything rots! Clay! Clay!! (to the body) Yes, little brother, you shall be born again to kill all the wolves that hurt your fawns!

[Rises up. Drawing himself up to his full height, with eyes blazing and face grim as death itself, hisses his words between clenched teeth]

And now to kill the wolves that hurt MY fawns !

A Voice : (from behind the trees) Where are you, Ekalavya? If you wander about hungry in the hot mid-day sun, you will soon be too ill to battle for your king; where are you?

Krishna : His poor old mother! *Mother?* (his face suddenly takes on a grotesquely humorous expression; he bursts into an unearthly guffaw of laughter sounding less of a human than of a hyena) HA! HA!! HAA!!! MOTHER! BROTHER!! SISTER!!!..... HA! HA!! HA!!! BALABHADRA! SUBHADRA!! SUYODHANA!! PAARTHA!! HA! HAA!! (bending down lays hold of the body by a leg and drags it into the cover of a bush nearby...Whilst about to exit) But my promise to you *to...somehow...anyhow...save your*

mother from even a moment of the pain of losing a son like you!
Yes, little brother, I will keep my promise!

[Slipping his hand into the bush draws out the dagger from the body.]

With the blood-stained dagger clenched in his right hand he crouches and silently creeps towards THE TREES FROM WHENCE THE VOICE CAME with all the caution and grace of a panther stalking its prey, and is lost to view]

The stage is empty and silent for fully a minute

Suddenly, a piercing scream of anguish is heard from behind the trees

CURTAIN DROPS FORTHWITH

...To the kindly Readers....

Is any explanation necessary for this volume? In a way...yes. The contents of this book flashed from his brain at different periods of Kailasam's life-time between 1915 to 1933, each one provoked by some query or the other by his "held-down" listeners. For instance, the 'Recipe' sprouted, on Kailasam receiving a copy of Siddavvanahalli Krishnasarma's book 'Parnakuti' and getting it read out to him. It was a book on Gandhiji in his Asram. Six years ago in 1927, Kailasam had been persuaded to read his 'Purpose' to Gandhiji who was then resting at Kumara Park (now Kumara Kripa) Bangalore. He ended up by 'not reading'; but the naivete of Gandhiji's smile got transfixed in his mind. It was at that moment the seed for the 'Recipe' was sown; but as on almost all such occasions, Kailasam needed a prod or a goad to render his conception into words. Sarma's book did the trick. Kailasam tore out a printed page from the book itself, wrote the poem in red ink on it and posted it on to Sarma. *That*, incidentally was his appreciation of the book too.

Every one of his creations has thus a back-drop story and readers would be regaled to many more such in the coming "Kailasam Miscellany" in English & "Kailasam—his life and works" in Kannada, shortly. Meanwhile re-edited

versions of his 'Purpose' and 'Karna' are coming to light presently, same as this book 'Little Lays & Plays'.

The "Letter to the Publisher" in this book has a story too. In 1933—eighteen years after his return from England and joining Government Service as a Geologist (1915-20)—his admirer and friend (now the Late) Deshpande Subba Rao, M.A., Bar-at-Law, of Nandyal took a fancy to the mss. of this book, printed it at his own cost and presented all the copies to Kailasam. Most of them were distributed free by Kailasam himself — *just as I am doing my publications of his works today*— the main reason then being that one lot of 500 copies of the book was offered the grand sum of Rs. 17-8-0—in those days—the 30s and 40s. Even before the venture, Kailasam had warned Subba Rao that he would lose in the bargain. Yet the latter insisted upon footing the bill saying emphatically that such a work should be widely read by intellectuals of the land who would get it placed in their hands whether they paid for it or not. And, the nominal cost printed on the cover? *Six Annas!* ! Hardly fifty copies were ever actually sold!

Incidentally, this was also the fate of Kailasam's first Kannada playlet 'Tollu-gatti' printed in a similar vein in 1919, by Kailasam's friend Sri P.Kodanda Rao -then Lecturer in Botany, Central College, Bangalore. This is the reason I approached him to write a note on 'Little Lays' too and he readily sent in his 'Tribute'. He has been evincing an

unflagging interest in keeping track of the work done regards bringing out Kailasam's printed as well as yet unprinted works these several years. Recently while going thro' his library he came upon the original script of Kailasam's 'Tollu-gatti' he had published. It is now preserved for posterity to look into. It is also a curious coincidence that exactly eighteen years after Kailasam's passing away, this first ever English work of his is coming out again as *he* wanted it. Sri Kodanda Rao's tribute is therefore well in place here.

My grateful thanks are due to the genius of Kailasam for kindly allowing me to handle his works in my own way. Kailasam left more works unwritten than written. When all, or most of them that I can manage to sort out and print, come to light, the intellectual world will know that Kailasam was an outstanding dramatist and playwright par-excellence, comparable only to himself.

That great son of Bengal—Rabindranath Tagore, became a world figure by a W. B. Yeats reciting his works in English first, and the Macmillan's popularising it later. Should not Kailasam a great son of the Kannada country be put on the map likewise?—is a question I posed for myself, even when he was alive. And the answer was, the printing and popularising of Kailasam's works, so that, if not today, years hence, when his re-oriented and pristine versions of the Indian Epic episodes come to be known by posterity, he

would be acclaimed as a second Vyasa of this age—no less. That is all my justification to carry on this work.

Grateful thanks are also due to the several friends, relations and admirers of Kailasam who have helped this venture in kind and coin bountifully. Sri T. Amritalingam Iyer (Kailasam's uncle) blessed this work by sending in Rs. 250/-. His son-in-law Sri V.T. Sreenivasan (Kailasam's cousin) initiated my first itinerary to important cities in India by arranging several programmes for me under his aegis first at Nagpur, some years ago and helping in the collection of funds by making a personal contribution of Rs. 75/-.

Sri N. K. Dixit, a leading lawyer of Dharwar donated Rs. 100/-, with Sri L. S. Gurumurthy, Head Master of Lakkavalli High School closely following up with another Rs. 100/-, Sri A. R. Raichur, Engineering Consultant, Bombay handed over Rs. 50/-; last but not least, my young friend Sri K. V. Sampath, Partner, Kalyan Pharmacy, Bangalore rounded off this list by another Rs. 100/-. The result is this "Little Lays & Plays" and the impetus to produce 'Purpose' & 'Karna', and other episodes of the Mahaabhaarata in due course.

Bangalore-11

—THE EDITOR

* * *

Post Script : After the first revised edition of this book was published, I chanced to light on half a dozen scripts of Kailasam including a letter written to me in 1945 from Madras, where he was working for a couple of years, editing, printing and publishing a weekly journal “Burma Naadu” pleading the cause of those unfortunate Indians who trekking their way back homewards from Burma apprehending its likely occupation by the Japanese in the second world war. The journal breathed the air of the returning Indians with such sincerity that every line of it touched their fellows here in India and all help was extended to them once their sad plight was known.

As usual, Kailasam working on his typewriter would occasionally branch off to note down flashes of his genius, most of which would of course look disjointed. To illustrate his erratic, “in moods” and “out of moods” writing—scribbling you may call it—I have printed here the sonnet on Krishna and Karna—the former can be read only through a magnifying glass and the latter is clearly written as in a copy book. Kailasam could if he wanted to, write legibly or scribble so as to be intelligible only to himself and to God, as he used to say!

Incidentally, the “proem” to “Bhishma’s passing” which he wanted to write as a ten-act play “Ekaratra”, starts with a-poem “Pandu Thyaga”—the renunciation by

Pandu of all his rights in Hastina's Kingdom—part of which is printed here interspersed with his scribblings.

Lastly, the attention of the reader is drawn to his letter of July 23rd 1945 from Madras wherein he states that he is "living only to finish" about seven of his creations. The seven he was keen on finishing before embarking on others were, Gurthee, Kali's Kids, Ramanna VC, Renuka, Ekarathra, Kittee and Ahobloo and a few others! and 7 is Expiation. This was on the eve of his choice as the Chairman of the Kannada Sahitya Parishad meeting which was scheduled to be held in December 1945 in Madras. He presided over it under sufferance, one can say, and out of great respect to C. Rajagopalachari who inaugurated the Conference.

Hardly a year after that "show of himself" as he termed it, Kailasam passed away on November 23-24, 1946 at "Avanti" at Bangalore in the house of his cousin Sri V. T. Srinivasan who has been virtually of great help in my itineraries giving recitals of Kailasam's plays and collecting monies to print them.

Just a personal note if you please! These books are *not sold by me but given as gifts* to institutions which sell them and utilise the returns to further a worthy cause of their own choosing in Kailasam's name.

The Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, and the Indian Institute of World Culture and the Hanumanthanagar Mahila Karmikara Co-operative Society of Bangalore, are among those that have kindly received the gifts which will amount to a thousand rupees worth of books each.

The Gita Book House in Mysore has been entrusted with selling about Rs. 10,000 worth of books and out of the returns, endow the three Universities of Bangalore, Mysore and Karnataka with about Rs. 3,000 each, on each agreeing to institute it, calling it a *Kailasam endowment* to be dealt with as each University thinks fit.

That is about the only way to popularise Kailasam and put him on the map of India as a Genius who was least known as one, in his days, according to some.

Sri P. Kodanda Rao must be gratefully thanked for agreeing to put his seal of approval on this second issue as on the first.

* * *

The frontispiece of Kailasam's picture is the courtesy of Sri B. P. Bairi, Udipi.

H. Krishna

A woman's wittig face. Her ways. Her eyes.
A paullins pen. Its grace. Mayhap its heart.
An eerie mastery of wizz art.
A honey tongue that stings & dithers
And yet old stings dithers. ~~And~~ ^{And} ~~the~~.
A smile that makes at first & ^{was} ~~is~~
And breast that bleeds at night & falls for.
And yet a fool & all. . . . In South

The Taylor man & I sat some time
about mid night by candle light
talking over — — — things
and then the woman & the negro girl
they ~~both~~ both came, & they both say
I'm paid for all slaves!

1891

Mens aequa arduis - Ora et Labora Ora pro Nobis
Ave Imperator, Morituri te salutant!
Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit!

Thy flaunted virgin phalanx cleft a two
By but a stripling, thine own pupils, now -

Whose bow abashed his sire's preceptor! you

In pain of tortur'd vanity let run

Thine eye to blind thee to the blackest deed

That smirch'd the scroll of Aryan Chivalry.

The while thy master's ghoulis' hate did feed

And fallen on thy victors' butchery,

Thy father's heart had it bore some pity

For Parthian in his dire calamity,

Woe's newses had shard thine aged brain

The reeling killing agony accus'd

Of death of thine own son! Thou didst but drain

The bitter gall thy Vanity had brewed

The obstacles that retard

our path to progress

are neither yawning chasms

- पाठ्य भाग

Synopses —

she sleeping. Hastings woke up
by blast of bugle & din of drum.

Pancho's Triumphant Return
from his Victorious Campaigns.

The reception. men
- lives - widows of war -
orphans of war -

Gala & Guest

The Smiling & Red Earth

11. Γ_2 - Pambow enters the

with a
g. grow!

62. Cutcherry, Put
July 22 54

Ramoo Seaventi.

I've got up to the teeth! she old again!
again! 'Coward'! 'Gardens'!
applause! 'Gardens' & 'Gardens'!
horrible!! I am aging - not in
a body, Curse in! In mind! In
mellowing mind is no good to any
body! Yet, Ramoo, I'll go!
through it all! But, for the last
time! Re the Purse I
wish it had not been on the
programme. Dugan, no! I live only to

finish

the
plate

1. 75 3/4
2. Kalis Kids
3. Ramann V.C
4. 20 1/2
5. 11 1/2
6. Kiltce V. 1/2
- and a few others!

By the way, I shall leave 26th month
arrive 2nd night. Love & Polishing
up. Sis. To the little ones for Pz

SOME PLAYS
OF
KAILASAM

...rendered into....

* * *

Sanskrit : Unmatha Keechakam; Ekalavya.

Marathi : Prayojan (Purpose); Home Rule-oo; Keechaka.

Hindi : Ekalavya; Vaidyana Vyaadhi; Ammavra Ganda;
Sankalpa Siddhi (Fulfilment) ; Keechaka; Home Rule-oo;
Tipparahalli Song and Satthavana Santaapa.

Tamil : Ammavra Ganda.

Telugu : Home Rule-oo; Ammavra Ganda.

Kannada : Ekalavya; Keechaka; Karna.

Desi : (Uttara karnataka desi) Home Rule-oo;
Bandavalavillada Badaayee.

Bengali : Ekalavya.

* * *

—are in preparation and print —

KAILASAM'S WORKS

NEW ISSUE

Kannada :

**Tollugatti (Part I) * Vaidyana Vyaadhi * Bahishkaara
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